

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY**COURT****11 DECEMBER 2023**

Present: Mr Paul Walker, Chair of Council (in the Chair), The Vice-Chancellor, Shah Yaseen Ali, Emerita Professor Katie Bushby, Charlotte Carpenter, Dr Alison Clarke, Lil Collingham- Clark, Professor Richard Davies, David Flory, Dr Stacy Gillis, Jonathan Glass, Olivia Grant, Professor Nigel Harkness, Jacqui Hodgson, Ajay Khindria, Vikas Kumar, Richard Maudslay, Henri Murison, Naomi Oosman-Watts, Abigail Pogson, Emeritus Professor Ian Postlethwaite, Sanjee Ratnatunga, Nick Robinson, Pat Ritchie, Professor Jane Robinson, Lucy Robson, Professor Maggie Roe, Angela Russell, Clare Talbot- Jones, The Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP, Dr Carys Watts, Baroness Laura Wyld.

In attendance: Dr Colin Campbell (Registrar), Justin Cole (Executive Director of External Relations), Professor Colin Herron (Professor of Practice in the School of Engineering) – item 2 only, Dr Simon Meacher (Head of Executive and Governance Office), Siân Breen (Executive Assistant).

MINUTES

The Chair welcomed the following members to their first meeting of Court: Shah Yaseen Ali, Dr Alison Clarke, Henri Murison, Naomi Oosman-Watts, Lucy Robson, Clare Talbot-Jones, The Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP, Dr Carys Watts.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 May 2023 were approved as a correct record.

(Circulated with the Agenda as Document A)

2. ELECTRIFICATION

Received a presentation from Professor Colin Herron, Professor of Practice in the School of Engineering. The presentation slides are appended to these Minutes.

Noted that (presentation):

1. There is some uncertainty and doubt in public perception of renewable energy sources and electrification, partly due to some inaccurate media coverage. Electrification relates to the replacement of the internal combustion engine, which represents a huge change to transport and the individual.
2. One of the largest challenges facing the electrification sector is the size of the workforce. The pipeline of UK resident graduate engineers is less than 10% of annual industry need up to 2025. Newcastle University is under its target for electrical engineer undergraduate intake.
3. The North East can be the centre of the UK electrical revolution, possessing the base materials for electrification – car manufacture, catapults and universities. It is a unique ecosystem not replicated anywhere in the world, with every point along the battery supply chain catered to. This should enable a power shift from the Midlands.
4. Newcastle University has been awarded the first battery national skills centre and plans to expand on this, developing a centre of excellence in Batteries, Power Electronics, Machines and Drives, manufacturing processes, performance and recycling. This vision for

this Electrification Process Innovation Cluster (EPIC) combines FE, HE and industry partners to upskill the workforce and drive new technological developments in innovative manufacturing processes.

5. There is currently no centre of excellence north of the M62 and North East universities need to develop electric process innovation, or other HEIs will. Newcastle University is pushing this, leading the Driving the Electric Revolution (DER) Industrialisation Centre, developing new degree Apprenticeship and CPD courses and receiving £1.3m in funding from the Faraday battery challenge to support the North East's battery manufacturing and innovation sector and skills development.
6. Newcastle University is also leading on finding a resolution to the problem of 'end of life' for batteries. The minerals required in their manufacture are finite and preparing batteries for second life or recycling is a crucial part of the electrification process. This incorporates AI and work is taking place with NICA to determine timescales predicting when batteries should be taken out of vehicles.
7. Electrification expertise goes beyond the North East, with knowledge and processes shared with our Singapore and Malaysia campuses. There are joint funding bids across the institutions and the collaboration exemplifies the University's 'Glocal' concept.

Noted that (discussion):

1. Newcastle University is collaborating with universities in the region and across the country. The Faraday Institution ("the UK's independent institute for electrochemical energy storage research, skills development, market analysis, and early-stage commercialisation") is made up of 27 universities and Newcastle has three co-Principal Investigators on six of their main projects.
2. EPIC will work with FE colleges to help encourage the transition from apprentices to engineers. A collaboration with the Discovery Museum on an exhibition called 'Steam to Green' will target 500,000 people, half of whom are under 12 – promoting engineering to children pre-secondary school.
3. Ensuring courses are well subscribed with home students will be crucial to ensuring adequate workforce for the future. Newcastle University general figures for international students are currently 13% UG and 65% PGT.
4. The majority of companies involved in electrification in the region work on fine margins of profit, generating very limited wealth and are therefore unable to finance training courses. Of the larger scale research companies, R&D branches are generally located outside the North East. Building a greater R&D ecosystem would help create the right environment to encourage funding and the University is working closely with government and NEMCA on Investment Zones. These represent large scale investment over the next 10 years to develop knowledge intensive growth clusters and provide a real opportunity to connect into the emerging initiative.
5. The workforce required for electrification will also include technician level and the University is working with FE colleges, providing lab opportunities for New College Durham to develop level 3 and 4 skills. Given the digital focus, the technicians being trained will be slightly more skilled than is traditional.

Resolved that Professor Herron be thanked for a most informative presentation.

3. MEMBERSHIP

Considered the following documents on membership of Court:

(a) The membership of Court for 2023-24.

(b) Profiles of members of Court.

(Circulated with the Agenda as Documents B and C)

4. HONORARY FELLOWSHIPS OF THE UNIVERSITY

Reported that:

(a) The Chancellor has confirmed her availability to preside at next year's Honorary Fellowship Ceremony and Dinner, which will be held on 2 May 2024.

Considered:

A report from Court Steering Committee recommending individuals to receive the award of Honorary Fellowships of the University in 2024.

(Circulated with the Agenda as Document D)

Resolved that:

The award of an Honorary Fellowship in 2023 be offered to the following:

* Dame Jackie Daniel
* Emeritus Professor Paul Flecknell
Eugene Milne
Michael Stephenson OBE

[* **Secretary note:** These awards have been deferred due to availability of recipient]

5. VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

Received a report from the Vice-Chancellor and President.

(Circulated with the agenda as Document E)

Noted that (report):

1. It has been 10 years since the University last won The Queens Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education. The University was recognised for its' role in leading an interdisciplinary research programme of global excellence in water security. This is long standing global work, involving numerous collaborators.
2. Court records its deep regret at the death of Sir Eric Thomas and sympathy for the members of his family. Sir Eric was well-respected across the sector and will be sorely missed by the entire higher education community.
3. Following publication of the House of Lords Industry and Regulators Committee report into the work of the Office for Students (OfS), the OfS has published its' response. This shows encouraging signs that issues are starting to be understood and the commitment to increased engagement with students and universities more generally is welcomed. OfS plans to develop work on universities' financial security demonstrates a better awareness of the sectors' concerns.
4. UKRI has taken action to suspend the work of Research England's EDI Advisory Group and investigate comments made in an open letter by Michelle Donlan.
5. The University is developing three online MSc programmes in Data Science. This could be the start of a changing offer to international students and will help mitigate the risk of

depending on students flying to Newcastle to undertake face to face courses. Market research demonstrates a huge demand for online Data Science courses which may expand to other areas.

6. Honorary Bachelor of Education degrees were awarded to 193 teaching alumni who initially passed their courses at a time when the Bachelor of Education degree did not exist. The Graduates were recognised for their lifetime contribution to the teaching community.
7. Newcastle University is working collaboratively with the four other Universities in the north east and has achieved real success in obtaining funding, including the award of £4.75 million from Durham County Council and North of Tyne Combined Authority through In- TUNE.
8. Work is ongoing with the University's societies to offer support and advice through the escalating conflict in the Middle East.

Noted that (discussion)

1. There is currently no national mandate for strike action, with recent ballots by the two main Unions involved with the University failing to achieve the required 50% turn out.
2. Across the UK, 40% of universities reported financial deficit, highlighting the challenges associated with the current funding model and ability to support new projects such as EPIC. However, Newcastle University hopes to return to a surplus in the next and coming years - if the share of international student numbers can be maintained. Achieving a surplus over the past decade has built cash reserves which allow for investment.

6. PAST COURT PRESENTATIONS: UPDATES FOR MEMBERS

Received a document updating Court on the presentation received in October 2021 on the University's work with our cultural partners.

(Circulated with the Agenda as Document F)

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None raised.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Reported that:

- a) The next meeting of Court will take place at 11:00 on Friday 3 May 2024 in the Keeton- Lomas Lecture Theatre, Armstrong Building.
- b) Court Steering Committee has agreed that a presentation on The Health Innovation Neighbourhood (formerly the Campus for Ageing and Vitality), should be the main item on the agenda.